

**Integrated County Planning
Broome County
First Year Report**

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I. Executive Summary:

The vision of Broome County is to develop a customer orientated service delivery system that changes agency and provider behavior, builds on community and individual strengths and relies on standards, best practices, and outcomes that are valid and measurable. We seek to accomplish this by creating a more streamlined and understandable planning process that guides us in allocating and managing our resources. To accomplish this vision, we will develop our plan in several phases over the next five years.

Phase I (1998): This phase focuses on data collection and analysis of current county services and spending in an effort to provide the planning team with all the appropriate information to continue with the ambitious vision of Broome County government. To be completed by the key members of the planning team (listed below) and consultants hired by this grant.

GOALS:

- * Identify and review all county plans & expenditures currently in place.
- * Identify and catalogue all committees, boards, teams, planning groups and task forces active in the broader community (including individuals involved)..
- * Inventory all current caseloads, services and funding.
- * Identify and hire consultants.
- * Begin to identify new management information systems.

Phase II (1999): This phase focuses on further articulating the vision of integrated planning for phase IV, developing a long-term marketing and technology plan, and completing the research conducted in the phase I. With the success achieved during phase I, the team expects to continue to deal with issues that arise throughout the year as one integrated planning team.

GOALS:

- * Begin to visualize and document what new planning system will look like.
- * Begin a culture re-orientation on planning for decision makers in the County & community.
- * Develop a marketing plan for communicating with the community about ICP.
- * Identify technological needs for the future and develop a plan to address them.
- * Complete data analysis from data collected in year 1.
- * Develop and commit to 5-10 desirable and measurable outcomes for all county agencies and community providers who contract with the County.
- * Develop a computer-based tracking system for the identified outcomes.

Phase III (2000): GOALS (tentative)

- * Provide training and education on outcomes and philosophy.
- * Assess barriers to collaboration and integration.
- * Make recommendations to State for legislative and regulatory changes.
- * Promote community awareness.

- * Begin to re-allocate resources and services to match identified outcomes.
- * Start tracking outcomes.

Phase IV (2001):GOALS (tentative)

- * Compile outcomes and measurements.
- * Evaluate and revise outcomes.
- * Refine measurements and tracking.
- * Re-allocate resources based on results.
- * Continue to provide training and orientation.

Phase V (2002): GOALS (tentative)

- * Analyze results for outcomes.
- * Review measurement and tracking.
- * Allocate resources based on outcomes and results.
- * Continue to promote community awareness.
- * Continue education and training.

KEY MEMBERS OF PLANNING TEAM:

Thomas P. Hoke, CSW, Deputy County Executive for Health & Human Services
 Pat Snieska, MPA Director of Public Health, Broome County Health Department (resigned)
 Sue Seibold Simpson, Acting Director of Public Health, Broome County Health Department
 Arthur Johnson, CSW, Director, Broome County Mental Health Department
 Patricia Davis, RN,MSN,CS, Coordinator of Children and Youth Services, Broome County
 Mental Health
 Robert Houser, MA, Commissioner, Broome County Department of Social Services
 Ann VanSavage, MASS, Director, Broome County Youth Bureau
 David Nemec, MSW, Deputy Director, Broome County Probation
 Dave Harnan, Deputy Director, Broome County Office of Employment & Training
 Elizabeth Hickey, CSW, Deputy Commissioner, Broome County Social Services
 Nancy LeBlanc, Director of Staff Development and Planning

Consultants:

Karel Kurst-Swanger, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Public Justice, Oswego
 State University.
 Surinder S. Kahai, Ph.D., Associate Professor, School of Management, Binghamton
 University.

II. Accomplishments in Year 1:

Within this past year the Broome County ICP has been engaged in an intensive process of data collection and research. In order to fully achieve a locally controlled interagency planning process, the team has begun to develop an in-depth understanding of county programs, services and spending. Although very time consuming, this research phase has resulted in a number of significant accomplishments for year one. The information gained from this process will be invaluable as we begin to develop a new integrated planning process.

1. Reviewed state planning requirements for each county department: We have examined each of the plans currently in place, or currently being completed by all of the county agencies participating in this project. Each county department presented their plans in a similar format to the planning team. The important information about the plans has been compiled in a spreadsheet, providing team members the ability to easily compare and contrast the variety of plans required of departments in the County.

2. We completed an extensive process of reviewing current county programs, services, and spending: In order to get a complete picture of how and where the county spends its resources for children and families, we collected data in a number of different ways. This analysis will ultimately assist us in determining what kind of institutional reform is necessary for integrated planning to be successful in the future.

We received a financial analysis of our Medicaid spending from NYPENN Health Systems Agency. We are currently undergoing a more extensive review of two specific categories of Medicaid spending, School Supportive Health Services Program and Community Rehabilitation and Support Services, which represent the categories where the largest increases in spending have occurred in the last few years.

Additionally, we spent considerable time reviewing our current spending patterns on service provision. We examined our spending in a number of ways: services we directly provide as county departments; services we contract with other agencies to provide; services we are mandated to provide versus services we provide because of our mission. Through this process we learned that there are about 3 agencies in the community receiving a large share of county dollars.

Our next step is to conduct three case-studies, analyzing the funding patterns of county dollars (including Medicaid and direct contract) to each of these three agencies. We will examine the number of children served, specific services provided, and outcomes.

We expect to uncover duplication in services and funding that our “old” way of planning has reinforced. This case-study process will inform us on what needs to be changed in the future as we look toward integrated planning. The team has acknowledged that the existing culture of county and state government has afforded local private agencies the opportunity to view public money as an entitlement with little accountability toward outcomes.

In addition to reviewing our spending patterns, we spent a great deal of time defining services and programs in an effort to communicate across disciplines. We adopted the “Touchstone” model as a theoretical back drop to examine programs and services (and future planning). We are currently developing a matrix of services and programs utilizing the six life

areas of the Touchstones model. This will enable us to view both our gaps and duplication in services across a human development continuum.

3. Developed an inventory of community-wide planning efforts for children and families: We collected information from many service providers and volunteer organizations in the community at large about planning for children and family services. We developed an inventory of organizations, associations, coalitions, committees, etc. that are currently involved in some aspect of planning for services for children and families. This inventory list will be used in the future for later stages of the integrated planning process. We learned that as county agencies we have little interaction with the schools and other educational agencies and programs that focus more on asset development (i.e. Boys and Girls clubs, the scouts). We acknowledge that we will need to outreach to these organizations as the planning process continues.

4. Development of a locally controlled interagency planning process: The work we have completed in the past year has substantially improved our ability and level of communication. We have adapted to each other and are working as a team for the first time in county government history.

We have developed a better understanding and appreciation for the programs, services, and regulations of each county department participating in this process. We have discovered that although we are all part of the same county system, we do not speak the same language. Therefore we have had to pay attention to the definition of terms and meanings of words that vary from discipline to discipline.

We have come realize that we share common struggles and successes and by working together as a larger county-wide team our coordination/cooperation can be a positive force in systemic change. Our improved communication has lead to the beginning of a culture change that has enabled us to experience first hand the power of dealing with real issues collectively in the forum we have created during this process.

The development of a locally controlled interagency planning process has already shown some achievements. For example, this past year we were able to be part of and support a community-wide grant project as a unified ICP team. Our collective vision was able to be realized by communicating as one.

Additionally, we had the opportunity to “stop” the duplication of county funding by reviewing a request of a local agency to the Probation department to replace funding lost to them by a state contract that had expired. Because of this ICP process, we were immediately able to ascertain that this agency was asking three different county agencies to fund their program 100 percent. The three county departments involved were able to meet with the agency and develop a plan for the future, eliminating the need for additional county resources.

5. Bringing theory back into practice: Another notable achievement of this process has been the infusion of a theoretical discourse with the goal of promoting “cultural” change and institutional reform. This process has afforded us the opportunity to ask ourselves challenging questions such as:

What should the role of government be in the provision of services to children and families?

At what level on the continuum of social problems should the county be involved?

Should asset building be a county level service, or should we provide support to the community at large to provide for asset building?

What does an integrated planning process really “look” like?

Will there be flexible funding streams available to us to make integrated planning a reality?

How is our “old” way of doing business getting in the way of truly enhancing the quality of life for our residents?

What are the cultural norms of the “old” way of doing business?

Do our programs and services follow best practice models validated by recent empirical research?

Is the infrastructure of our county system capable of integrative planning?

How do we conceptualize programs, services, and policy related to children and families?

How do we cultivate a constituency for institutional reform?

What role does technology play in our ability to plan, provide and deliver services in the future?

Taking the time to dialogue on issues such as these will enable us to clarify and cement our vision for the future, ensuring a strong foundation for reform. This level of discourse is rarely achieved in bureaucratic settings, yet is critical to planning for enduring systemic change. This grant project has provided us the opportunity to discuss, debate, and conceptualize our future system.

III. Key Learnings for Year 1:

In addition to the achievements noted above, the Broome County ICP team has learned a great deal over the past year.

1. The process has been a good one so far: The process we have been engaged in over the past year has been a very productive one. We recognize that change is slow and difficult and therefore have chosen to meet frequently (every two weeks) while closely following a well designed work plan. In addition to regular meetings we have held two retreats to work on specific projects. Our philosophy of process has taken on a “hands-on” or experiential approach whereby we have completed all of the work ourselves. Although this approach has taken more time, we have ownership over the process and the outcomes.

The process has shown that when time is organized, directed and kept on track goals can be met. Our process is structured, yet flexible, allowing us the ability to develop and grow as we proceed. Even our diversions and/or misteps have been able to be successfully incorporated at other points in the process.

We have spent the majority of our time this past year engaged in the analysis of current planning processes, government service provision, and financial tracking. This knowledge has

been invaluable in providing us with a baseline in which to make real change happen. We have been able to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. We recognize that in order to achieve innovation in the way we plan for services we will need to change the “culture” in which we currently operate. This process has enabled us to bring a new level of theoretical understanding to our dialogue, challenging us to think and act as a county government differently. We must continually remind ourselves: Why are we doing this? What are we hoping to achieve?

We also recognize that this level of “culture change” will not occur overnight, but can occur with time, commitment, and the active participation of the county leaders. Our success will come by keeping the long range view in focus while attending to the day to day issues that surface.

Through this process we have come to appreciate the vast resources filtered through our county government and have realized that we do have the financial resources to improve the lives of our children, however our “system” reinforces duplication and fragmentation of service. Additionally, our system has not demanded accountability in outcomes.

We have found that there are a few organizations in the community monopolizing the majority of county dollars (through direct contract and Medicaid funding). Our system has encouraged the fragmentation of service provision, although this has often been driven by mandate, regulation, and funding. Planning and service strategy has been made difficult by the rigidity of categorical funding.

Our future ability to integrate planning will require that we pay closer attention to whom we are funding, what are funding, and are we getting the desired results? We will need to be released by the “bonds” of categorical funding to successfully designate money to meet the needs of the community.

2. Our current ways of thinking and institutional cultural practices must be reinvented: Changing our “culture” and our ways of thinking has been the most challenging aspect of our work over the past year. We constantly remind ourselves to “think outside of our boxes” in order to achieve new levels of creativity and alternative ways of viewing problems. Our group discussions and organized “debates” have been very helpful to us.

We are mindful of our task of moving our vision and programs to an asset building approach that incorporates a “Touchstone” foundation. It has been very helpful to conduct our first year analysis keeping this new vision in focus.

However, we recognize that culture change will be our biggest and most challenging goal over the next four years. The foundation we have laid in this first year on improving our communication and developing a hands-on process has prepared us for what lies ahead.

3. We are more aware of where we need to develop better community linkages: Through the research and data collection process we have come to appreciate the fact we did not include community representatives in the process this first year. In fact, we are now certain that we are not ready for the addition of community members to the ICP process until we are very clear about what their role will be, and what their long-term position in the new integrated planning process will be.

Our analysis has clearly demonstrated that we lack linkages with the schools and with agencies that generally provide for the overall developmental needs of children, especially agencies that focus on building assets. Developing linkages in a variety of ways with these institutions will be our top priority in years to come.

We have spent some time discussing the need to “market” the goals of ICP to the broader community, and we will be developing a “marketing plan” in the beginning of Year 2.

4.Change must occur at the state level: State planning requirements are completely uncoordinated and there is a need to define the role of the state in achieving desired outcomes. What most state agencies require of the local government units is not authentic planning, but more documentation of workload and function. Our experience mirrors the findings of Miesing and Anderson (1991) who found that New State Agencies were consumed with “operational” planning and political maneuvering, not true strategic planning¹.

Our analysis has demonstrated the following key learnings about the current planning process:

- *State planning requirements across state agencies is inconsistent.
- *Funding is often not related to need assessment or the actual needs of the community.
- *Not all plans are required to be outcome based.
- *Plans provide little opportunity for service provision to be linked to state of the art practices and validated research.
- *Categorical funding provides for too much labeling of distinct populations and limits the ability of counties to respond to the actual needs of the community.
- *Most of the plans are locked into a 3-5 year planning cycle, making it difficult to respond to the local, state, and federal political and social changes.
- *State Education Law guides some plans, yet the Department of Education is not part of this ICP process.

¹ Miesing, Paul and Anderson, David F. 1991. The size and scop of strategic planning in state agencies: The New York experience. American Review of Public Administration 21(2): 119-133.

IV. Barriers:

At this point the most significant barrier has been the current contracting process. We would recommend that the Office of Children and Family Services provide each county with an advance, instead of claim vouchers.

Although financial management has been difficult over the past year, we have not encountered any other barriers that have impeded our progress, however, our lack of technological advancement will be a barrier in the future. We plan on spending time on developing a technology vision, so that we may build our integrated planning system with appropriate technological supports.

Additionally, it would be helpful if the State could provide leadership around integrated planning issues. We would like to suggest that the State begin examining the barriers to integrated planning. This process is doomed to failure if the State is unable or unwilling to remove the state-level barriers that exist that currently reinforce fragmentation and inflexibility.

V. Goals for Year 2:

Our goals for year 2 of this grant project are as follows:

1. More clearly articulate our vision, goals and outcomes for year 5: We are ready to begin to conceptualize:

- *What do we hope to achieve with a new integrated planning system?
- * What components of our current system do we want to maintain?
- * How will our new integrated planning system function?
- * What role will members of the community play in our new system?
- * What barriers exist to impede our developing a new planning system?
- * How will we engage consumers in the process?
- *What role does technology play in our vision of a new system?
- * In what areas do we want to create systemic change?

2. Complete data analysis: We have collected a great deal of data during the first year of this project, and we have some analysis yet to complete. We will begin by conducting three case studies, investigating the link between spending, services, programs, and outcomes. We have identified three agencies that receive the majority of county resources and we would like to truly know what we are getting for our money; in what ways has the quality of life for consumers improved, how many children are being served, etc.

3. Develop a marketing plan for communicating with the community about ICP: We will add a marketing consultant to our team during the next year. We will develop a marketing plan that will assist us in communicating our goals to our stakeholders, i.e. our staff, legislators, contract agencies, other community organizations, consumers, and the community at large.

4. Identify technological needs for the future and develop a plan to address them: We have a number of technological issues to contend with including: having the proper equipment, training of staff to utilize equipment, developing technology to support our future goals, etc.